UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/47/PV.76
16 December 1992

ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 76th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 1 December 1992, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GANEV (Bulgaria)

later: Mr. AL-HADDAD (Yemen)
(Vice-President)

- Report of the Economic and Social Council: report of the Second Committee (Part I) [12] (continued)

- Question of Palestine [30] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

- Financing of the United Nations operation in Somalia: report of the Fifth Committee [145]

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12 (continued)

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE (PART I) (A/47/717)

The PRESIDENT: This afternoon, the General Assembly will consider part I of the report of the Second Committee (A/47/717), concerning the prevention and control of AIDS. During this afternoon's meeting, the Assembly will also observe World AIDS Day.

Today marks the fifth World AIDS Day. It is therefore especially appropriate that, this afternoon, we are considering the report of the Second Committee dealing with the prevention and control of AIDS. The global threat posed by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic requires a truly global response by the family of nations. The challenges of this evolving pandemic involve a wide range of health and socio-economic issues, including the prevention of the transmission of the HIV infection, the demographic impact of the disease, the effect on vulnerable populations and the negative effects on women and their children.

The United Nations system has responded to these challenges by undertaking prevention and control activities and by putting in place programmes aimed at the mitigation of negative social and economic effects. In 1988, the family of nations declared 1 December to be World AIDS Day, an annual day of observance designed to expand and strengthen world-wide efforts to stop AIDS. Its goal is to open channels of communication, promote the exchange of information and experience, and forge a spirit of social tolerance. World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for talking about HIV infection and AIDS, caring for people with the HIV infection and AIDS, and learning about AIDS. The only international day of coordinated action against

(The President)

AIDS, it is now a yearly event in most countries. By highlighting AIDS prevention and care activities already under way and stimulating new ones, World Aids Day helps build a lasting world-wide effort to stop AIDS.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This is the fifth World AIDS Day. I pay a tribute to the work of the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO first alerted us in the mid-1980s to AIDS as an epidemic disease.

The theme of World AIDS Day 1992 is "A Community Commitment". It is a call to the world to mobilize - to mobilize money, energy and community resources to fight against AIDS. HIV, which causes AIDS, is a virus. Its cure will come from medical science, but the social, psychological, economic and political costs of AIDS are unlimited. AIDS kills productive people. It destroys families. It undermines economies. It threatens communities. This is a crisis of vast extent. AIDS is as destructive as war. There is no vaccine for AIDS. We must mobilize against AIDS.

AIDS is a disease which touches two subjects - death and sexuality. In many societies, sexual matters are discussed openly but death is not. In other societies, death is talked about but sex is not. In some societies, both are taboo. Thus, open discussion of AIDS is not always easy. No HIV-infected person should be stigmatized. All those affected need understanding and practical support. AIDS kills mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, children and babies. AIDS affects women and men, old and young - in sum, human beings.

AIDS is world-wide. No country has brought it under control. No region or individual country, or ethnic or religious group, has avoided it. Within countries, AIDS is not confined to any single group or to those living any single lifestyle. AIDS is now spreading most rapidly among young

(The Secretary-General)

heterosexuals, particularly girls, in developing countries. Ninety per cent of all infected people are in the developing world. Not for the first time, there is a link between poverty and disease.

Poor developing countries will be badly hit. Some countries will be socially and economically destroyed. One of the great achievements of post-colonial Africa - the great reduction in child mortality rates - could be reversed. WHO estimates that HIV has infected some 11 to 12 million men, women and children. More than 2 million have developed AIDS. Most of them have died. WHO estimates that, on this day, a further 5000 citizens of the world will become infected with HIV. By the year 2000, the virus will have invaded the bodies of 30 to 40 million people.

(The Secretary-General)

The costs of nursing the dying and caring for the very young and the old who will be left behind will be enormous. Demands on budgets will increase. Production will decline. Teachers, soldiers, nurses and office workers will be affected. No group will escape.

Action at the planetary level is the only answer: to educate, understand, care and, above all, find a cure.

When a problem is global, United Nations coordination is essential. AIDS demands a multisectoral, integrated approach from the United Nations. In my report to the Economic and Social Council last June I said that the need for the United Nations to mount a comprehensive and coordinated response was clear. We must work, through the United Nations, to care for those who suffer, to assist those who suffer indirectly and to block the spread of AIDS.

There are now 135 national AIDS programmes in operation. They have been planned, set up and assisted through the collaboration of United Nations bodies and agencies, donor Governments and the private and voluntary sectors.

Within the United Nations system, I have created a single inter-agency advisory group with strengthened terms of reference. The group held its first meeting in November 1992 and will meet regularly. It is committed to creating a coordinated and effective response to the crisis.

The United Nations has adopted a compassionate, supportive and far-sighted personnel policy on AIDS. I regard this policy as a model for every organization the world over, and I am making it widely available. We regard our personnel as a family. We will support them in this crisis and do all we can to retain their skills and knowledge for as long as possible.

Hope lies in our ability to work together. The General Assembly, in adopting resolution 46/203 a year ago, sent a clear message to the community

(The Secretary-General)

of nations. That message is a message of tolerance. AIDS is a threat to all men and women everywhere. This is a time for science and social justice to come together in a great cause: the cause of victory over AIDS.

(spoke in French)

A moment ago I mentioned the world-wide fight against AIDS. It is a new world war that we must carry on, the third one of this century. This one, however, does not divide people; on the contrary, it brings them together in an immense battle on a thousand fronts, which I shall group into three main fronts: first, the scientific and medical, then the political and social, and, finally, the psychological and human.

AIDS is not something that is destined to follow us from one century to the next. We have eradicated smallpox and syphilis, and we shall also conquer AIDS. We must vow to reach this goal before the year 2000. We shall not leave a legacy of AIDS to the people of the twenty-first century.

In order to conquer AIDS it may be necessary to go in a new direction: let us act as if this were an all-out war. This calls for two measures: first, financial investment commensurate with the threat, in all the countries of the world, beginning with the wealthiest; and, secondly, a broad effort to coordinate all of the world's medical knowledge.

Let us turn now to the political and social front. Here I wish to emphasize the responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole. When WHO first launched World AIDS Day, in 1988, it demonstrated that it intended, without wasting any time, to mobilize a truly world-wide campaign. We were the first to understand that in no country anywhere would AIDS be a foreign illness.

The purpose of the WHO world programme was to encourage and assist Governments to set up the necessary policies. That was no easy task, for

(The Secretary-General)

often there were many prejudices to be overcome. However, I believe we are in the process of winning this first battle. The United Nations, setting an example, is mobilizing all its forces. Besides WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others are devoting some of their programmes to the AIDS problem.

Just as the United Nations system has done vis-à-vis Governments, Governments in turn must play an energizing role among groups and communities, be they decentralized, regional, local, professional or associative. I should like to appeal here to the heads of organizations, business leaders and elected officials in regions, cities and villages to take the initiative in sensitizing public opinion and giving support to those who are ill.

I now turn, in conclusion, to the third front. This year's theme is community commitment. In this regard I should like to make a third appeal, one addressed to those who are ill. The disease that afflicts them must not be for any of them a reason for shame. No one is helped by hiding, keeping silent and lying. Let them speak out openly.

The fight against AIDS is, first and foremost, a cultural challenge, and the active participation of those who suffer from the disease is essential. Thanks to them and their frankness, those around them and their community leaders will take initiatives that will not only benefit those who are ill but will also be useful in terms of prevention. This undertaking will certainly require a great psychological effort; and this effort is essential because, in the final analysis, it all boils down to one single factor: the capacity of men and women to commit themselves openly to each other.

(The Secretary-General)

AIDS is a global problem, and therefore its solution must be global. That is why the struggle must be genuinely universal; it must involve all countries without exception, all Powers, without exception; all communities, without exception. This war must be fought to the fullest, not only to save millions of lives but also so that our faith in progress and in science can be maintained.

The victory that we together can gain over AIDS must show that we are determined and able to win other battles against illnesses. The battle against AIDS, therefore, is a symbol in several ways. Let it be the symbol of what humankind is capable of doing when it gathers all of its forces in the service of life.

The PRESIDENT: As members are aware, on the occasion of the observance of World AIDS Day a special briefing on AIDS has been scheduled, featuring the Director-General of the World Health Organization, four speakers from around the world who are leaders in the battle against AIDS, and the Minister of Health of Jamaica.

I shall therefore suspend the meeting now, so that this special briefing can take place.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly will now continue its consideration of part I of the report (A/47/717) of the Second Committee on agenda item 12, which concerns the report of the Economic and Social Council.

I request the Rapporteur of the Second Committee to introduce the report of that Committee.

Mr. BALZAN (Malta), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: I have the honour to present the report of the Second Committee contained in document A/47/717, under item 12 of the agenda, "Report of the Economic and Social Council". An addendum to this document will be issued subsequently, containing other draft proposals for action under the same agenda item.

In paragraph 8 of the report, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Prevention and control of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)".

I should like to inform the Assembly that the square brackets which appear in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution should be deleted.

This draft resolution was adopted by the Second Committee without a vote.

The PRESIDENT: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Second Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Second Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

(The President)

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Second Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take a decision in the same manner as in the Second Committee.

The Assembly will now consider the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 8 of its report (A/47/717).

The Second Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Prevention and control of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 47/40).

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded our consideration of part I of the report of the Second Committee on agenda item 12.

AGENDA ITEM 30 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/47/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/47/716)

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): The General Assembly, as one of the organs charged with finding peaceful solutions to situations resulting from violations of the provisions of the Charter, is once again considering the question of Palestine, an issue that at once engages and challenges some of the fundamental principles and purposes set forth in the Charter, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security; the right of peoples to self-determination; the non-acquisition of territory by force; and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Regrettably, since the Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) some 45 years ago recommending the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with a corpus separatum for Jerusalem, as a peaceful adjustment of the Palestinian conflict, the resolution has not been implemented in its entirety. While the State of Israel has been in existence for some 45 years now, the Palestinian nation, which the General Assembly acknowledged and which was to be established as an independent State, has to date been prevented from coming into existence. Meanwhile, Jerusalem itself has been annexed, and other Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

Trite as this may sound, it is this refusal to implement General Assembly resolution 181 (II) that is at the root of the Palestinian problem today, and unless and until the Palestinian people are able and are allowed to exercise their option and right to self-determination and statehood, the problem of Palestine will continue to plague this body, and indeed the rest of the international community, including Israel, for a long, long time.

That this should be so is understandable, given the just and legitimate cause of the Palestinian people, whose national identity has remained intact and whose unity and determination to achieve self-determination and statehood have remained undiminished despite all vicissitudes.

Stating that fact should not be construed as adopting an anti-Israeli position. In the view of the Sierra Leonean delegation, it is equally in the interest of Israel and of the Israeli people as a whole that resolution 181 (II) should be implemented in its entirety and that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) should be observed and implemented, specifically by the withdrawal of Israel from the territories it has been

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

occupying since 1967. Observance by Israel of those historic resolutions would not only assuage and mitigate the historical injustice that has been done to the Palestinian people: we are convinced that it would also bring peace to Israel and to its neighbours in a region inhabited by people with a great civilization and culture who hold so much potential for human development but who have remained tormented and in turmoil for so long because of the Palestinian conflict.

It is therefore ironic that even though the international community has for a long time been familiar with the root cause of the malady - that is, the Palestinian problem - the remedy for the malady of Palestine, unlike the remedies for other maladies, is well known, but the will to find a solution to this long-drawn-out conflict has been lacking.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Therefore, in the view of the Sierra Leone delegation, what is required to bring this conflict to an end is a great historic compromise on the part of all the parties involved, a historic compromise similar to that struck in Europe following the ravages of the Second World War, or that in Zimbabwe or Namibia, which brought independence to those two countries. Today we observe and even admire the fact that some European nations that once regarded each other as mortal enemies, having decided to bury the hatchet, to embark on a determined peace process, finally achieved a historic compromise and are today cooperating very closely in the political, economic, social and even defence spheres, to their mutual benefit.

South Africa's prolonged intransigence over granting independence to Namibia was based on grounds of national security. That reason has proved to be unfounded with Namibia's independence; South Africa's territorial integrity and security have in no way been compromised or threatened by it.

We are of course aware that no two situations are identical. However, we have observed how - with good will, good faith, sincerity and a determination to find solutions - conflicts that once appeared difficult and intractable have been resolved, to the detriment of none and the advantage of all those concerned.

The Sierra Leone delegation therefore once again calls for a historic compromise by Israel, the Palestinians and other States in the Middle East similar to those which have served the international community well in other instances. The ongoing Middle East Peace Conference should be viewed as a renewed opportunity to find a solution to the problem of Palestine, an opportunity which should not be missed. The Conference should be guided by

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

good faith, sincerity and a determination to achieve a solid compromise. That historic compromise, to which I have already alluded, would involve, inter alia, the establishment of a Palestinian State, even if this should come about through interim self-government, as is now proposed, and Israel's withdrawal from all territories it has been occupying since 1967, including Jerusalem, which is of major importance to three of the world's major religions and their followers.

Such a compromise by Israel should facilitate a similar historic compromise by the Palestinians and other Arab States, leading to a comprehensive peace agreement, which should in time develop into the same kind of regional cooperation as is seen today among once belligerent European nations. Such a comprehensive peace agreement would not only be equitable as between Israel and the Palestinians, but would also be durable as between Israel and the contiguous States.

The question of Palestine remains central to developments in the Middle East today, much as it has for decades. Over the years, as hope for a resolution ebbed and flowed, so attitudes became uncompromising, political positions hardened and the prospects for peace became a mirage. Repeated initiatives yielded little. As time marched on, resignation set in.

Today, as we look back, we see that the wisdom of what had been advocated remains valid. The Sierra Leone delegation firmly believes that the original solution proposed by the Assembly with respect to the question of Palestine remains valid and fundamental - indeed, indispensable - to resolving the conflict in an enduring manner. That is a two-State solution, the two States being Israel and Palestine.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Over the years the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has sustained and promoted the just and legitimate cause of the Palestinian people. We pay tribute to Ambassador Birane Cissé of Senegal for his indefatigable efforts in promoting the cause of the Palestinian people and in helping to find a peaceful solution to this long-drawn-out conflict.

Mr. KHAMSY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): The Palestinian people have the legitimate right to live in their own independent State in that land of Palestine which they inherited from their ancestors, just like all the other peoples who regained their freedom and national independence at the end of the colonial era; they have that right both historically and under international law. Therefore, the international community has committed itself to help this martyred, uprooted people, who find themselves permanently facing complete annihilation by Israel, the Power occupying their homeland.

In a world now free of ideological confrontation, we feel that it is in the interests of the two peoples, Palestinians and Israelis, to live on good terms, with peace restored, each in its own State with its own distinct national entity, once inalienable fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination and the right of return, have been restored to the Palestinian people.

The Middle East peace negotiations, which began on 30 October last year in Madrid, and which have been resumed several times, including meetings in Washington, have led us to believe that the negotiations between the parties concerned, particularly between the Israelis and the Palestinians, although

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

they are long, arduous and complex, will not fail to lead one day to an overall settlement, just and honourable for all. We have all the more reason for this belief, since the peace process is jointly sponsored by the United States and the former Soviet Union and is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Labour Party's assumption of power in Israel will give a new impetus to these talks, as, it seems to us, the new Prime Minister of Israel has already shown in his various statements, as he has shown in his approaches to the problem of the Middle East as a whole, more flexibility and realism than his predecessor.

A glimmer of hope has certainly emerged from these two important events. My delegation also welcomes the fact that finally the United Nations has been invited to participate in the negotiating process at the multilateral level, and that to this end the Secretary-General has just appointed Ambassador Gharekhan of India as his Personal Representative, to be a fully fledged extraregional participant in the talks.

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

But will all these positive notes prove to be but an illusion in the light of Israel's intransigence and delaying tactics, particularly with respect to the question of Palestine? Indeed, on the ground, especially in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, developments continue to give rise to pessimism. The international community is particularly concerned at the deterioration of the situation in those territories caused by the repressive measures to which defenceless Palestinians fall victim daily, measures that run counter to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

All those repressive practices are governed by a strict military "iron fist" regime; for 25 years they have consisted of harsh and inhumane measures such as arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, deportation, sealing and demolishing of homes, confiscation of land and water resources, restrictions on freedom of movement, collective punishment and murder. These run completely counter to the spirit of the current peace negotiations and are applied with complete scorn for all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly.

Along with these cruel discriminatory practices, the present Tel Aviv Government, although it promised to suspend new settlements, has not completely renounced the policy of the systematic settlement of the territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and even Jerusalem.

(Mr. Khamsy, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

The international community must therefore take more effective measures, first, to put an end to that pernicious policy - which aims at altering the demographic makeup of these territories, ultimately destroying their Palestinian identity and finally annexing them outright as a fait accompli - and, secondly, to demand Israel's total withdrawal from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

Faced by this serious threat to its very existence, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories has no alternative to uprisings and to accepting new sacrifices. In that connection, the intifadah, now in its fifth year, is a symbol of the courage and determination of this martyr people in its sacred struggle to regain its fundamental, inalienable rights.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic pays a tribute to those acts of courage and sacrifice. We shall join the international community's efforts to reaffirm its solidarity with and firm support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, under the direction of the Palestine Liberation Organization - the struggle of that oppressed people which has suffered for far too long.

Mr. ABDUL GHAFFAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): The fundamental changes in international politics have created a climate that favoured a shift by the international community from confrontation to cooperation and promoted a tendency to search for solutions to chronic international disputes that spawned hotbeds of tension in various regions of the world. These profound political changes have left their imprint on the Arab and international outlook and, through the flux of grave international events, have had a major impact on the political thinking of the Palestinians,

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

who have not been isolated from the effects of such transformations in the Arab world and on the international level. Consequently, their thinking has responded positively and realistically to the international tendency to find solutions to serious regional disputes and problems that had seemed intractable in the days of the cold war.*

That realism in Palestinian political thinking, in the context of current international changes, does not mean acceptance of any de facto policies. It simply reflects the desire of the Palestinian people to achieve a just peace that would be founded on its exercise of its inalienable rights and, especially, the right to self-determination. It was on that basis that the Palestinians participated in the Madrid peace Conference held in October last year and in the subsequent multilateral and bilateral negotiations.

The trouble with strategic Zionist thinking is that it stems from the belief that peace in the Middle East could be imposed by force. Therefore, Israel, since it occupied the Arab territories in 1967, has tried to entrench a policy of fait accompli through all manner of repression and oppression, the building of settlements and the inflows of immigrants.

The imposition of an unjust solution on the Palestinians could lead only to a lifeless, cold, formal peace. Peace on a fait accompli basis - as desired by Israel - will only mean renewed oppression and the heaping of new injustices on the Palestinians, who had been driven away in 1948 from their homes and from their ancestral homeland.

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* Mr. Al-Haddad (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

It is abundantly clear that the huge injustice inflicted on the Palestinians through the imposition of the fait accompli policy involves the confiscation of their land to make place for more Jewish immigrants who are brought to the occupied Palestinian and the other occupied Arab territories. From 1967 through 1992, the Israeli authorities have confiscated 60 per cent of the land of the West Bank and Gaza and have permanently settled some 230,000 Jews in about 212 settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

It is well known that Israel's strategy since it came into being has been to deal summarily and violently with any Palestinian political institution, inside or outside the Palestinian territories, that advocated or worked for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947.

Any peaceful settlement in the Middle East must be built on the realization that the question of Palestine is the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If that is accepted, solutions to the question of Palestine and the question of the Middle East will emerge and lead the way to the achievement of a just and lasting peace between all the parties to the conflict.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

In this connection, we should like to reaffirm the following principles: first, the need for Israel to withdraw from the territories it has occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and withdraw from all other occupied Arab territories; secondly, the need for security arrangements for all countries of the region within secure and internationally recognized borders; thirdly, the need for a solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, with special emphasis on operative paragraph 11 of that resolution; and, fourthly, the dismantling and elimination of the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel by military force in 1967.

Israel's attempts to marginalize the role of the United Nations in the Middle East peace process very clearly aim at avoiding the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the application of rules of international law in dealing with all matters relating to the question of Palestine. Israel, as is well known, is the only country whose accession to the United Nations was dependent upon specific conditions that it has never met.

The State of Bahrain stresses the importance of the United Nations role in the Middle East peace negotiations. The United Nations was the Organization that adopted the historic resolutions that have affected the fate of Palestine, since before and after the end of the British Mandate, such as the resolution on the partition of Palestine.

In this connection, we call upon the Security Council, as the most important body of the United Nations, to shoulder its responsibilities for the protection of Palestinian refugees in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, particularly since Israel, as the occupying

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

Power, does not comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

Mr. ELHOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again, the General Assembly debates the question of Palestine which has been consistently inscribed on its agenda for longer than any other international problem. It is almost as old as the United Nations itself. Over the past 40 years, the General Assembly, the Security Council and other regional and international organizations have adopted numerous resolutions through which the international community defined its position on the question of Palestine and on the means of resolving it. That position of the international community underscored the right of the Palestinian people to return to their land, to exercise self-determination and to establish their independent State.

The changes witnessed by the world over the past few years have led to unprecedented and radical transformations. Notwithstanding the clear impact of those changes on international relations, and the fact that they have helped to settle and contain many disputes, the realities of the situation show that they have had no visible effect with regard to the resolution of the Palestinian question. In addition, the latest talks on the situation in the Middle East have not yielded any concrete results. Today, one year after the start of negotiations last October, current indications are that the situation remains at the starting point and that the promises made at the beginning of the negotiations have gone with the wind. Thus, the fact remains that the long drawn-out suffering of the Palestinian people that has gone on for almost half a century still continues. The children of that people are still being

(Mr. Elhouderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

subjected to all forms of injustice, such as the occuptation of their land, displacement, wanton imprisonment of tens of thousands, killing of the innocent and defenseless, demolition of houses, closure of schools and universities and assaults on refugees. This is a reality that is substantiated by evidence and by the findings in various reports including the report by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People, document A/47/509. Paragraph 817 of that report states that:

"Settlers have raided villages and refugee camps, attacking the inhabitants and destroying their property."

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and the continued Israeli persecution of the Palestinian people have neither weakened that people's resolve to resist occupation nor has it lessened its determination to defend its dignity, regain its rights and realize its aspirations. The intifadah is but one link in the chain of the Palestinian people's struggle against the injustice it has suffered and an expression of its resolve to regain its basic rights to life, freedom and independence. The Palestinian intifadah has attracted world attention and has gained the sympathy of most sectors of world public opinion as the uprising of a people who refuses to submit to the will of others. It is only the occupying Power that has consistently tried to cover up the causes and motives behind the Palestinian intifadah and has depicted it as an illegal activity that must be stopped by any means at hand, including the most brutal and repressive of methods. Notwithstanding the General Assembly's condemnation of Israel's practices against the children of the intifadah, the occupying Power has persisted in its repressive measures,

(Mr. Elhouderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

as shown in the above-mentioned report by the Special Committee on Israeli Practices. That report, in its account of the situation of the Palestinians since the start of the intifadah, shows that many have been killed under mysterious circumstances and that acts of violence and indiscriminate persecution have been perpetrated against all, even children, women and the elderly. The report also shows that conditions of prisoners and the sort of treatment meted out to them continue to worsen. This treatment involves the continuous use of torture together with various forms of physical and psychological abuse, such as deprivation from food and from sleep.

The tragic situation of the Palestinian people and the dangers which threaten their very survival due to the occupation require the international community to work to put an end to the long suffering of that people whose children are increasingly targeted by dangerous acts of repression and by restrictions that affect every aspect of their lives. To take the necessary measures to guarantee their safety and protection is not a moral and human responsibility only but also a legal obligation that is clearly stipulated in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

(Mr. Elhouderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

It is equally urgent for the international community, which has already shown interest in the tense situation in the Middle East and has pronounced its support for the Palestinian people through numerous United Nations resolutions, to translate these resolutions into practical steps by putting an immediate halt to the organized immigration of Jews to Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories and to the building of settlements, and by supporting the Palestinian people's right to return to its land, to exercise self-determination and to establish its own independent, sovereign State. It is the taking of such measures that would guarantee peace and justice in this part of the world.

The Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has always supported the steadfast stand of the Palestinian people in the face of injustice and has also supported that people's right to liberate their land and establish its independent State. My country's delegation seizes this opportunity to reaffirm that position and to urge the international community to take the necessary and practical steps to implement the international resolutions calling for the protection of the Palestinian people, thereby enabling them to attain their inalienable and legitimate rights.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Special Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories in their efforts to provide us with the information contained in their reports to the General Assembly, and for all their work aimed at deepening international awareness of the facts surrounding the question of Palestine and the conditions of the Palestinian

(Mr. Elhouderi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

people under occupation. Also, we should like to commend their efforts to bring about the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Over the past year, we witnessed significant changes in the situation in the Middle East. The Middle East peace process initiated by the Madrid Peace Conference has brought a favourable turn in the quest for a peaceful solution to the Middle East question, which has plagued peoples in all countries of that region for more than 40 years. The Palestinians have participated directly for the first time in the negotiations with the Israelis. Rounds of bilateral negotiations have been conducted between the Arab States and Israel, and multilateral negotiations are also under way. Discussions on the relevant questions are beginning to enter a substantive stage. The parties concerned have all shown their willingness for a settlement. All this has helped create conditions for an early, fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestinian question. Nevertheless, if there is to be a final settlement of the question, further tireless efforts by all the relevant parties and the international community, including the United Nations, are still needed.

China has all along supported the just cause of the Palestinian and Arab peoples. China attaches great importance to the settlement of the Middle East question and welcomes all the new changes and developments that are contributing to the quest for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. China supports all the proposals that will facilitate an early, fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestinian question. The Chinese Government is of the view that the Arab-Israel dispute should be settled in a fair and comprehensive manner through negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions. The occupied Arab territories should be returned, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people should be restored and the sovereignty and security of all the Middle East States, including Israel, should be respected and protected. We hope that all parties concerned will make full use of the current opportunity, and will adopt a more practical and flexible attitude. We also hope that the Israeli side will face reality and conduct direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative recognized by all the Palestinian people, stop building settlements in the occupied territories and allow deported Palestinians to return to their homeland. We are convinced that as long as all parties concerned persist in seeking peace, no matter how tortuous is the road of peaceful negotiations, swords will eventually be turned into ploughshares and the harmonious coexistence and common development of the Arab and Jewish nations will finally be achieved.

The United Nations is playing an increasingly important role in settling regional disputes and maintaining world peace. Over the years, the Organization has made steadfast and tremendous efforts to seek a fair and reasonable solution to the Palestinian question and the Middle East question as a whole. In our view, with the in-depth development of the Middle East peace process, the United Nations should continue to play its due role both in the process of political settlement of the Middle East question and in the follow-up actions after the conclusion of a peace agreement. We welcome the full participation of the United Nations in the multilateral negotiations of the Middle East peace talks. As a permanent member of the Security Council,

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

China will, as always, work with the international community to promote the Middle East peace process and make its due contribution to the final achievement of a fair and lasting settlement of the Middle East question, with the Palestinian question at its core.

Ms. KHARPADE (India): Peace and security in the Middle East is dependent on a just and overall settlement of the question of Palestine, which remains the core of the conflict in the region. For 45 years the international community, as represented by the General Assembly, has grappled with this question, but a settlement has remained elusive.

The political map of the world as we knew it 45 years ago has changed. With the new era of the improved political security climate generated by the end of the cold war, the world today bears little resemblance to the years of great-Power and ideological rivalry that characterized it in the past. This new spirit of cooperation, accord and understanding has helped in the recent resolution of conflicts that the cold war had formerly nurtured in many parts of the world.

(Ms. Kharpade, India)

The Middle East is also changing. Yet, with its oft-demonstrated explosiveness, it is one region where a failure to realize peace could have the potential of undermining the shape of things to come. The need for evolving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in this region is, therefore, urgent and imperative.

It is in this spirit that my delegation welcomes the Middle East Peace Conference launched a year ago. A great deal of time and effort has been put in by its co-sponsors of the Conference, the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We applaud these efforts. It is important to note that negotiations under this Conference have continued throughout the past year. Even though the process may not yet have produced tangible results, it must be realized that, given the deep-rooted suspicions and mistrust, past setbacks and the history of repeated conflict, all the parties concerned have demonstrated unquestionable goodwill and political maturity in getting to the conference table. Caution, circumspection and even suspicion are but natural, and should not detract from our common cause of encouraging and supporting the parties concerned to move forward in the quest for lasting peace in the region, which, we are certain, they all desire. The process will be, as indeed has been demonstrated over the last year, arduous and strewn with what might seem insurmountable obstacles. Overcoming them will require unique political courage and statesmanship. Compromises and sacrifices will no doubt be necessary. But we should not lose sight of the fact that this rare opportunity for a peaceful settlement can be missed only at heavy cost for both the people of the region and the world as a whole.

The issues involved concern not only the question of political peace, territory and settlement but also the future of the Palestinian people, who have been condemned to a life of never-ending struggle as refugees. In the

(Ms. Kharpade, India)

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of which my country is privileged to be a member, we have worked constantly to reaffirm the basic rights of the Palestinian people - the right of return, the right to self-determination and the right to a homeland. The Palestinian people, undaunted by the adversity and suffering which history has heaped upon them, have continued to wage their campaign, through the intifadah, for their just rights. We do not believe that there can be lasting peace in the Middle East until these rights are guaranteed.

Side by side with the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people lies the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within internationally recognized boundaries. The peace between Israel and Egypt recognized this principle, as did Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which were adopted unanimously and should be seen as political decisions applying to both the transitional and the final stages in the Middle East peace process. Land for peace is one of the bedrock principles enshrined in these resolutions and, hence, it is essential that Israel withdraw from all Arab territory occupied since 1967. In this context we are encouraged that the Peace Conference has recognized this principle, that the co-sponsors have endorsed it and that Israel itself has moved its political positions towards its acceptance.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called for the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We believe that this proposed conference and the peace process launched by the Madrid Conference are not

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mutually exclusive, but serve to complement each other. In any case, the United Nations has an indispensable role to play in efforts towards lasting peace in the Middle East. Consequently, we are encouraged that the United Nations has been included as a full, extra-regional participant in the multilateral talks associated with the Peace Conference. We are also encouraged that Palestinians from outside the occupied territories have begun to participate in the working group on refugees. We are certain that their participation and that of the United Nations will go a long way towards building that mutual confidence which alone can serve as the foundation for a future community of Member States living in peace and cooperation with each other in the region.

The bilateral negotiations are essentially political. The multilateral negotiations are essentially economic. Each supports the other, and progress in one should not be made dependent upon conclusion of negotiations in the other. My country has had the honour to participate in the meetings of all five working groups of the multilateral negotiations. Though this multilateral phase may not yet have a concrete dimension or direction, the process which has been initiated appears set to continue. We value our inclusion as one of the selected non-regional parties in these talks, and we intend, given our long-standing and close relationships with the countries of the region, to place our wealth of experience in handling similar issues at the disposal of the States directly involved for them to use as they see fit.

At the Non-Aligned Summit held in Jakarta, our Heads of State or Government agreed that, with the positive transformation of the global political landscape and the peaceful settlement of various disputes, the

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Middle East can no longer be a cauldron of violent upheaval, insecurity and instability. They called for a new regional order of justice, dignity and stability through mutual accommodation, based on the principle of peaceful coexistence and international legality. That has to come from the countries of the region. My delegation is certain that these countries will again show that statesmanship and wisdom alone can usher in a lasting period of peace and prosperity to this ancient land.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): Throughout the last four decades, the United Nations has devoted its efforts to resolving the question of Palestine. As a matter of fact, few questions have been the focus of so much attention by the Organization. Nevertheless, the question of Palestine continues to figure as an item on the United Nations agenda as an unresolved problem, because Israel still persists in its denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independence.

The Arabs, for their part, have done their utmost to find a solution to the Palestinian question on the basis of the principles of international law as enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The most recent of these efforts was the Arabs' participation in the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, in which they took part in a spirit of responsibility with the goal of reaching a just, lasting and global settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict through the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on the Palestinian, Syrian and Jordanian fronts, that is to say on the basis of the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by the use of force, the need for Israel to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories and to fully and unconditionally implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978). In all this, the Arabs have a well-defined position. They have supported the right to self-determination of Palestinians, and they have tried to draw a link between the transitional period and the final period of the Palestinian peace process in order to implement Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in regard to the occupied Palestinian territories. They have highlighted the illegal nature of Israeli settlements in any part of the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds and the Golan Heights; they have called for putting an end

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

to Israel's practices of repression in the occupied Arab territories; and have taken the position that all parties have an equal right to security and peace.

Regrettably, however, Israel continues to manoeuvre and procrastinate in an attempt to hold on to the occupied Arab territories. A whole year after the Madrid Conference and the beginning of bilateral negotiations, negotiation has not led to any tangible progress towards peace. To this date, the Israeli Government has not made any clear commitment to the elements and principles of the peace process. It has not declared that it is prepared to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. It has not recognized the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and has not committed itself to completely stopping its settlement activities in the occupied Arab territories or its intention to stop violating human rights.

The Palestinian masses, directly after the Madrid Conference, welcomed the Palestinian representatives who had participated in that Conference, with olive branches in their hands, as an expression of the hopes they attached to the peace process. A few days ago, one year after the talks between Arabs and Israelis began, these same masses have demonstrated and voiced their dismay at the failure to achieve any progress in the peace process, at the continuing building of settlements, at the continuing flagrant violations of human rights, at the shooting of innocent people, and at the brutal assassinations perpetrated by special clandestine Israeli units whose members are sometimes disguised in Palestinian garb.

The world is now well aware of the fact that the question of Palestine, which is the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is the question of a people who has been dispossessed from its land and deprived of its rights, and

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

that until a just solution has been found to this question on the basis of the United Nations resolutions, the Arab-Israeli conflict will continue.

The question of Palestine is not merely a question of the inalienable political rights of a people. At the humanitarian level, what is at stake is the issue of civil and human rights. The majority of the Palestinian people have become refugees over the past four decades, while the Israeli authorities have continued to settle Jewish immigrants in the occupied Arab territories in naked defiance of international public opinion and humanitarian values.

The international community has stressed that peace in the Middle East requires Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and the guaranteeing of all the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. Anyone in Israel who may believe that it would be possible to achieve genuine peace without Israel's complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories is badly mistaken. The way to a just and comprehensive peace is clear and well defined. Any partial withdrawals will not bring peace to the region or to Israel itself. The security that Israel wants cannot be achieved through its continued occupation of Arab land or through military superiority, the building of settlements and the pursuance of inhuman practices. There can be real peace only through complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and genuine commitment to the fundamental elements of peace. The dictum of secure borders that cannot be crossed no longer exists. The theory of preventive security zones has collapsed. Real security can be achieved only in a context of peace and in the absence of injustice, repression and aggression.

Our understanding of what peace is, like all other peoples of the world, convinces us that peace is attainable only within a context of freedom and

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

justice, those two prizes for which man has struggled for many centuries. Whatever anyone may say about the change in mood or policies in Israel, the fact remains that Israel's leaders still hold on to the occupied Arab territories and continue to haggle with the international community, not over the return of those occupied territories, but only over the promise to soft-pedal their settler-colonialist activities somewhat in those territories. This, however, will not lead to the real peace we understand, the peace which we have been struggling to achieve.

(Mr. Awad, Syrian Arab Republic)

The road to peace is clear. It requires only that Israel implement international resolutions which reject occupation, annexation and threats. Israel's procrastination will only serve to delay the peace process. My country has repeatedly declared from this rostrum that it will not abandon any part of any territory nor will it renounce any national or Arab rights. We will accept only a just and honourable peace for all on all Arab fronts.

To cherish one's rights is not to be intransigent or extremist. It is a right and an obligation recognized by international law.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): The question of Palestine is one of the long-standing and difficult international problems that continue to pose a threat to international peace and security. Members may recall that the issue has been addressed since the first special session of the General Assembly in April 1947. It was exacerbated as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict when the world witnessed the beginning of a large-scale displacement of Palestinians.

The 1967 war brought further grievances and sufferings in particular to the Palestinian people. This year marks the twenty-fifth year of Israel's blatant occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands. This reminds us that for decades Israel has defied various United Nations resolutions. As a result, the Palestinian people have long been suffering injustices in their search for their own homeland and for peace and freedom.

At this juncture, I should like to reaffirm my delegation's full support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just cause. Indeed, today's discussion reflects our continued concern and renewed efforts to resolve this conflict in a manner that is in compliance with all the relevant United Nations resolutions.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Despite various setbacks, I am glad to note that since last year we have begun to see encouraging developments for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We welcomed the convening of the Madrid peace talks, which was a significant step towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the formula of land for peace and the legitimate and inalienable national and political rights of the Palestinian people. We consider the peace talks to be an important avenue in providing a peaceful regional framework and a step towards building up mutual confidence and understanding among the participating parties.

Nevertheless, we also noted that little tangible result seems to have been achieved in the current peace talks, both in terms of format and substance. It is my delegation's view that the peace process lacks some fundamental elements, including the question of giving the Palestinian people full and direct participation in the process, as well as Israel's need to go beyond rhetoric by adopting measures demonstrating its peaceful and good intentions.

We believe that a lasting peace cannot prevail unless the peace process involves all the parties in conflict. In this respect, my delegation recognizes that the unconditional participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on an equal footing, in all stages of the negotiations and meetings of the current peace process, is essential. At the same time, my delegation deems it important for all the parties in the peace talks to be allowed to raise any issues of concern. Israel, too, must commit itself resolutely to addressing the question of Palestine, which remains the core issue in the Middle East conflict.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

It is equally important for Israel to demonstrate its peaceful and good intentions in order to help create a better climate conducive to progress. It is regrettable to witness, however, that the current peace talks on the Middle East are being conducted against the background of continued and escalating violence and aggression, orchestrated by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. Consequently, the Palestinian people continue to suffer under intolerable political, economic and social conditions. This is exacerbated by Israel's policy of unlawful annexation of Palestinian and Arab lands. Regrettably, this, together with the settlement policy which allows more Jewish immigrants to be settled in the occupied territories, is being continued under the present Israeli regime.

My delegation feels that the pursuance of such policies, which serve to demonstrate Israel's intention to change the demographic composition and the legal status of occupied Palestinian territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and other Arab territories, remain matters of the greatest concern to my delegation. In this regard, we fully support Security Council resolutions 465 (1980), 476 (1980) and 478 (1980) declaring Israeli measures pertaining to Al-Quds Al-Sharif as devoid of legal validity.

We are deeply concerned with the deterioriation of human rights conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of Israel's increasing repressive policies, which are in clear violation of the basic principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We also share the concern of the international community with regard to Israel's continued deportation policy and its implementation of discriminatory policies on Palestinian residents, as well as the confiscation and destruction of Palestinian properties.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

Israel's repressive actions have inevitably led to a vicious cycle of violence in the occupied territories. The Palestinians continue to resist the political, economic and social domination and injustices through an instituted uprising, or intifadah, against the occupying Power. The intifadah involves tremendous sacrifices and hardship for the Palestinian people. It serves to underline an even more urgent need to intensify efforts to find a political solution to the question of Palestine.

Brunei Darussalam continues to deplore Israel's persistent defiance of all relevant Security Council resolutions. We are duty bound to do so until we see some concrete act on Israel's part, and a demonstration in some tangible manner of the Israeli regime's commitment to comply fully with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

If the situation in the occupied territories is allowed to deteriorate as a result of Israel's intransigence, it may adversely affect the positive atmosphere and confidence which the peace effort has helped to build. In turn, it may also lead to the failure of the current peace process.

My delegation therefore deems it important for the international community to do its utmost to maintain the ongoing peace negotiations. We also urge Israel to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who have fled the areas under occupation. It is therefore incumbent upon Israel immediately to cease all settlement projects and give assurances to the international community that the issue of the Jewish settlements will not resurface since it has been the irritant and obstacle to peace in the region.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

My delegation believes that it is time for the world body to look into practical ways to complement the current regional efforts to find a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this light, we further believe that the idea of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East merits our full support.

AGENDA ITEM 145

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/47/734)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to present the Committee's report on agenda item 145.

Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (interpretation from Spanish): It is my honour to introduce to the General Assembly the report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 145, "Financing of the United Nations operation in Somalia" (A/47/734).

As it says in paragraph 2 of its report, the Committee considered this item at its 31st and 33rd meetings.

At the 33rd meeting the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee, introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/47/L.3, "Financing of the United Nations operation in Somalia". At the same meeting the Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of its report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before the Assembly begins to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take a decision in the same manner as in the Fifth Committee.

(The President)

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/47/734).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.3 was adopted (resolution 47/41).

The PRESIDENT: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 145.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.